

IRC 2016 London Team Report by Jon Horsman (Head Coach)

The London junior Triathlon team this year travelled to Strathclyde Country Park for the National Championships, involving the 13 regions in the UK & part of the Under 20's festival with Junior & youth elite racing.



The IRC is a draft legal team event with Podium spots awarded for the first 3 athletes in each race, points are scored for each individual place in boys & girls T2 & T3 categories, with the London team selected from our Regional series results.

Unlike previous years the team travelled by plane to Glasgow where we were transferred to Strathclyde Country Park by coach.

Ed Simpson the team Manager drove all the team bikes & equipment by van to the event, a journey that started early Friday morning & hopefully finished on Monday evening! With various bike pickups & drop offs in London along the way.

The organisation & preparation for this year's event was a military operation with "Field Marshal Simpson" leading the charge, his time & effort for this event on a voluntary basis was staggering.

Rumors of deadly green water at the Country Park turned out to be just rumors & the temperature was a pleasant 17 degrees although the majority of Youths & Juniors decided to opt out of the practice swim on Saturday (scared by the idle gossip)

All the athletes had plenty of preparation time on Saturday to practice the pontoon dive start (a unique experience for most) & ride the technical bike course which consisted of 2 climbs, 2 dead turns, 2 very tight turns & a fast downhill section with very little flat terrain, luckily the run was relatively flat out & back loop along the lake shore.

The team had prepared for the course in advance at the various training sessions leading up to the event, it did however, take a few practice laps riding the course on Saturday to gain the confidence to really race the bike leg.

After dinner, a team talk and a toast to Ella's dad Nick on his 50th Birthday, it was early to bed in preparation for the early racking time on Sunday morning.

Race day saw near perfect conditions with warm sunshine, very little breeze & a very calm lake.

The U20'S Festival proceedings were kicked off by the junior female & males with London athletes involved in some very fast racing.

Next was the start of the IRC event with the T2 boys led onto the dive pontoon by a Scottish bagpiper to take their allotted positions ready for the swim start. Chris, Oliver & Christo all had good swims & got onto their bikes in good positions finding small draft groups to work with on the technical course, Ollie used his excellent bike skills to work his way back to Christo. All three athletes had good run legs with Christo finishing in 8th place a fantastic result for a first year athlete followed by Oliver in 14th & Chris in 32nd place, a great all round start for the team.

The T2 girls race was next with Cerys entering transition in an outstanding 3rd place with Maisie & Anna in the middle of the pack, unfortunately Cerys bike chain came off exiting T1 & she lost some of her swim advantage putting it back on (with the help of a marshal). Maisie & Cerys worked together on the bike with Anna in a group a little further back.

Great running from all 3 girls especially Maisie who stormed to 17th place followed by Cerys in 27th & Anna in 28th place, a special mention to Cerys who overcome her bike mechanical & the disappointment of losing her swim advantage to finish the race

with a smile on her face (or was it a grimace) a real test of character.

Next up was the T3 boys who all had great swims exiting the water in the top 10 positions with Brett leading the way, all had good bike legs with Jacob & Matyas working together on the bike with Brett not far behind.

Unfortunately for Brett he lost some time in transition finding a spare place to rack his bike which had been taken by another athlete in a very crowded transition area. All ran well with Matyas finishing in a fantastic 11th place closely followed by Jacob in 15th & Brett in a creditable 23rd spot, another great team performance.

The T3 girls were next up with London having a very young team, all first year athletes but with the benefit of all having raced the IRC in 2015 as T2 athletes. Ella had a great swim with Jessica doing a seal impression on the swim exit ramp a few places back, Lottie worked hard in the swim to exit with a small group a bit further back in the group, all 3 girls raced hard on the bike & consolidated their positions leading out to the run.

Jessica had a storming run to finish in 11th place followed closely by Ella in an impressive 14th unfortunately for Lottie she had some breathing problems on the run & had to stop for over 5min before finishing the race alongside a cycle escort with loud applause from the crowd & a testament to all the London athletes who all showed a great test of character throughout the racing.

London finished in a respectable 9th place with 3 top 10 finishes with South West taking the title followed by Scotland & East Midlands. The standard of racing was once again very high and our very young London team demonstrated excellent triathlon skills & was a credit to both themselves & the region showing great team spirit.

A big thank you to all the parents who were of great assistance during the weekend, Ed our amazing Team manager, Jim for his tireless work on the junior series and developing triathlon opportunities for juniors in London and without which we wouldn't have an IRC team & Sheila for her continued hard work during the year.

Hopefully Ed's will return from Scotland eventually!

Jon Horsman

Team Coach